

processes. In this layer the perinuclear reticulum seems to be the last structure to lose its definition. Pigmentary accumulation is almost universal in advanced cases. It is contained in a reticulum whose meshwork is much larger than that of other parts of the cell; the threads which compose it are much thicker and the meshes are frequently broken up at the centre of the area of degeneration. Its characters might support the idea that it differed in constitution from the reticulum proper of the cell, although it might also be maintained that a portion of that structure was undergoing degeneration.

A cordial vote of thanks was accorded to Dr. and Mrs. Bevan Lewis for their hospitality.

The members dined together in the evening at the Queen's Hotel, Leeds.

#### NOTES ON THE HISTORY OF CARLOW ASYLUM. (1)

By J. J. FITZGERALD, M.B., Medical Superintendent.

Carlow District Asylum, when erected in the year 1831 to provide for the insane of Counties Carlow, Kildare, Kilkenny, and Wexford, was reckoned sufficient for the accommodation of 104 patients. The populations of the above counties at the census of 1831 were: Carlow 81,988, Kildare 108,424, Wexford 182,713, and Kilkenny 169,945; total 543,070. At the census of 1901 there were 37,748 persons resident in County Carlow, and 63,566 in County Kildare; total 101,314; whilst to-day, July 6th, 1905, there are 426 patients in residence. Doubtless you are all aware this District Asylum now only provides for the insane from Counties Carlow and Kildare.

The buildings of the asylum cost £18,474 5s. 9d., and for the 15 acres 39 perches of land which comprised the asylum estate £2289 os. 3d. was paid—£152 2s. 6d. per English acre. A jury assessed the value of the land, the owners thereof had no reason, I imagine, to quarrel with their verdict. Furniture and bedding cost £1053 6s. 2d., and other contingencies, including "wire lattice to sundry and various windows," which I suppose in plainer terms meant iron bars, £705 18s. 2d. The total cost of the Asylum for land, buildings, and equipment, was £22,552 10s. 4d.; about £220 per bed. This sum was repaid to the Treasury, which at that time did not charge interest on the loan, by twenty-eight equal half-yearly instalments. County Carlow repaid £3246 3s. 1d., County Kildare £4313 12s. 0d., County Kilkenny £7681 os. 0d., and County Wexford £7281 15s. 2d.

The institution was handed over to the Local Governors on February 20th 1832, and on the following day the first "Manager and Moral Director," as the Superintendent was then termed, Mr. Francis Crofton, took up duty. It is noteworthy that this gentleman had no medical qualifications. The first physician—non-resident—was Dr. Meade Nisbett Stone, who was succeeded, in April, 1836, by Dr. M. E. White; eventually Dr. White, in 1848, became the first Resident Physician and Superintendent Manager, as the Resident Medical Superintendent was then designated. He maintained the view, generally held in his day, that curable cases only should be admitted or maintained in asylums. Dr. White died in 1866.

The Asylum was opened on May 3rd, 1832; the first patient, admitted on May 7th, 1832, belonged to County Kilkenny. On January 31st, 1833, the inmates numbered 78—23 from Carlow, 7 from Kildare, 21 from Wexford, and 27 from Kilkenny. Neither epileptics nor idiots were admissible. Pay patients were not tolerated.

The plan of the Asylum was that of a radiating building of two stories, having the airing courts confined to the irregular spaces between the radii, the front building and a high outer wall. The laundry and kitchen filled the space immediately behind the centre of the front building, which was occupied by the apartments of the manager and matron. The patients had to wash in open courts, under shelter of a shed, one bath being provided for each side of the building. Neither places for religious worship, dining halls, water-closets attached to the wards, sculleries, nor store rooms existed. The airing courts, the only places for the outdoor recreation of the patients, were situated on the northern side of the

building. Why such an undesirable situation was adopted I leave others to guess. The sewage system was ill-planned and very defective, so that, till comparatively recent times, dysentery and typhoid, as might be expected, accounted for many of the deaths. No infirmary existed, and the sick were treated in their single rooms.

The following composed the staff of the Asylum, with their respective salaries and wages per annum:

*Officers.*—Mr. Francis Crofton, manager, £220; Miss Elizabeth Freeman, matron, £100; Mr. Meade Nisbett Stone, physician, £100; clerk and store-keeper, £30; gardener, £30.

*Domestic servants.*—Five keepers, £12 12s.; five nurses, £6 6s.; six assistant nurses, £4 4s.; one cook, £10; one assistant cook, £4 4s.; one laundress, £6 6s.; one assistant laundress, £4 4s.; one board-room and office maid, £4 4s.; one housemaid, £4 4s.; one yard-keeper, £6 6s.; one gate-keeper, £6 6s.

Chaplains were not appointed till 1844. The superior officers were appointed by Government, the subordinate by the manager.

The assistant nurses had to do a portion of the house work on the male side, part of their duty requiring them to have the day-room perfectly clean and ready to receive the male patients in the morning, and I expect they performed their duties satisfactorily, as Dr. White during his term of office suggested that a female nurse should be employed for nursing male sick patients. I believe that this suggestion was not adopted. Dr. White, however, anticipated in this matter one of our modern measures for the treatment of our patients.

He likewise held that the punishment of insane patients for offences should be deprecated.

The asylum originally contained eighty-eight single rooms, or cells as they were usually termed. It will be remembered that the entire accommodation was only for 104 patients. The corridors were flagged in every division, and many of the single rooms had tiled floors. The windows were small, their frames were of iron, and barred in nearly every instance. In fact, the Institution was in its early days but little removed from a prison. The inspectors-general of prisons were the supervising authority; the Inspectors of Lunatics were only created and appointed in 1845. The dietary was as follows: servants, daily, 3½ lbs. of potatoes, 1 lb. of bread, and ¼rd quart of new milk. Weekly, 3 lbs. of meat with vegetables. Butter, eggs, sugar, and tea could, of course, be provided out of the salary of £4 4s. per annum; after the nurse had clad herself for her short visits to her friends and relations in Carlow town, an annual holiday was never dreamt of.

*Patients.*—Breakfast, 8 oz. oatmeal with ¼rd quart new milk. Dinner, 3½ lbs. potatoes with 1 pint mixed milk (males), 3 lbs. potatoes with 1 pint mixed milk (females). Supper, 8 ozs. brown bread and 1 pint mixed milk.

The average cost per head of this meagre fare amounted to 2½d. per day.

The admissions from 1832 to 1843 averaged about fifty per annum, and the recovery rate was 48·3 per cent. In 1843 it was reported, apparently with some satisfaction, that cases requiring restraint and coercion did not exceed 2 per cent. of the asylum population. In the year 1843 the average number resident was 169. In the official report of the following year there is a record "that a straw house had been fitted up comfortably so as to accommodate eleven more patients." This sentence for a long time puzzled me, till I remembered that the bedding in the asylum was at first straw, and, accordingly, I think we may assume that this house that had been used for storing straw was turned into a dormitory for patients.

1844.—In 1844 typhus fever visited the asylum, and the patients attacked were removed to what is now known as the garden house, an isolated building in the large garden.

1846.—In 1846 the inmates numbered 193; the asylum had been built to accommodate 104 patients, and as no structural additions had been made, and but slight internal alterations, we can readily understand the condition of overcrowding that must have existed at the time.

About 8 per cent. of the patients were placed under restraint. The physician states "that he frequently on his visits orders a patient to be freed from restraint . . . and he further states that restraint has been on the whole greatly diminished during the year." The inspectors-general, commenting on this, write: "Muffs and arm-straps do not sound well at the present day, and the sooner such instruments are abolished the better." Of the 193 patients, nine had committed murders;

one of these unfortunates killed his companion in a paroxysm of maniacal excitement in the year 1831; he was tried and acquitted on the plea of insanity, and soon after removed to this asylum. Subsequent to his recovery, which took place in the course of a year, he employed himself as steward on the grounds and in aiding the attendants in their various duties. On the erection of Dundrum Asylum, completed in July, 1850, he requested to be allowed to remain in Carlow, "where all his associations were centred," or to be allowed to emigrate. As the former request could not be legally acceded to, His Excellency the Lord-Lieutenant, being satisfied of the man's character and the securities entered into that he would not return to this country, gave him permission to leave. He sailed from Liverpool for New York, was shipwrecked on the north-west coast of Ireland, lost whatever property he possessed, and narrowly escaping with his life, came up to Dublin, and placed himself under the control of the inspectors. What was his after history I have been unable to determine. Bleeding and mercurialising the patients were common modes of treatment, although blisters on the head and counter-irritants were also employed. Opium and hyoscyamus were the common hypnotics. At this period it was suggested to enlarge the Asylum so as to accommodate 100 more patients, and to separate County Kildare from the Asylum district, and add it to Maryboro Asylum district. A governor of the Asylum proposed as an alternative than an asylum for females be established in County Kildare, and that Carlow Asylum be used exclusively for males.

1852.—In 1852 Kilkenny District Asylum was opened, and on September 13th and 14th of that year fifty-four Kilkenny patients were transferred there from here, Carlow Asylum district having to refund £6511 to the new Asylum.

1854-5.—For the year 1854-5 the average cost per head was £20 7s. 6d., a little over a pound less than for the financial year 1904-5, just half a century later.

1856.—In 1856 the inspectors recommended the separation of County Wexford from this Asylum District; this necessary change was not carried into effect till twelve years later, when the County Wexford patients were removed to Enniscorthy Asylum.

1857.—In 1857 there was one bath for the whole establishment, and that a very bad one; what happened to the other I cannot say. The bath was outside, and was a cold and shower one. There was only one water-closet in the whole house, probably for the superintendent. The patients had to wash in the airing courts.

1872.—By order in Council of January 19th, 1872, £20,000 was expended in enlarging the Asylum; this expenditure provided 146 additional beds, so that the Asylum then accommodated 250 patients. Within the past twelve or thirteen years £34,700 have been expended, and the Asylum, it is estimated, can accommodate 421 patients. £77,252 10s. 4d. have been spent on this Asylum, so that each bed has cost about £183 10s. 0d.

The history of the Institution from 1872 to the present is comparatively well known to you all, but the appended extract from a recent Report of the Inspectors of Lunatics briefly sums up the changes the Asylum has undergone in the interval:

"It is a pleasure to notice the great improvement which has taken place in the condition of this Asylum since my colleague and I first visited it in 1890.

"The patients were then confined in cheerless exercise yards, the day-room accommodation was altogether insufficient, most serious sanitary defects existed in all parts of the buildings, the clothing and bedding were ragged and inadequate, many of the sleeping rooms were cold in the extreme, the dietary was meagre, no associated entertainments were held, and there were few objects of interest provided in the wards.

"Now the Asylum has been modernised in nearly every respect, and the care and treatment of the patients reflect great credit on the Committee, the Resident Medical Superintendent, and the Staff."

In conclusion, I hope that this brief and sketchy paper has added some small interest to your visit to-day to Carlow District Asylum.

(<sup>1</sup>) A paper read at the meeting of the Irish Division, held on July 6th, 1905, at the Carlow District Asylum.